



**Report to the Legislature**

**Racial Disproportionality  
in the Juvenile Justice System**

**Chapter 415, Laws of 1993  
RCW 13.06.050(3)**

**December 1, 2006**

Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration  
Division of Treatment and Intergovernmental Programs  
P.O. Box 45720  
Olympia, Washington 98504-5720  
(360) 902-8499  
Fax: (360) 902-8108

## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
ExecutiveSummary.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Progress Made to Reduce Disproportionate Minority Confinement .....	5
Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative.....	5
Reducing Disproportionate Minority Contact through Community Mobilization.....	6
MacArthur Foundation Models for Change.....	6

## **Executive Summary**

The Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration is charged with the annual responsibility of reporting to the Legislature (Chapter 415, Laws of 1993) progress made toward reducing disproportionate minority confinement in the juvenile justice system.

The focus of this year's report is upon efforts in Washington State to reduce disproportionality through:

1. The implementation of evidence-based detention alternative programs and other promising practices outlined in the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) funded and administered by the Annie E. Casey Foundation;
2. Beginning the study and development of new strategies through the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change initiative; and
3. A new initiative introduced in Department of Social and Health Services, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) to reduce disproportionate minority contact (DMC) through Community Mobilization.

## Introduction

The Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration is charged with the annual responsibility of reporting to the Legislature (Chapter 415, Laws of 1993) progress made toward reducing disproportionate minority confinement in the juvenile justice system.

RCW 13.06.050(3) defines elements required from this report to include identification of efforts to reduce disproportionality, evaluating any progress made toward achieving that goal, and recognizing cost-effective programs that reduce disproportionality.

*Disproportional Minority Contact* (DMC) is defined as the degree to which minority juveniles coming into contact with the law enforcement and juvenile justice systems differs from that of the general at risk juvenile population (youths 10 years old and older). DMC in Washington State is a reality faced daily by minority youth. African American, Native American, and Hispanic youth are most affected.

From June 30, 2004 to July 1, 2005, 13,127 young people were sentenced in Washington Juvenile Courts. The percentage of African American youth sentenced was 3.38 times the percentage of African American youth in the state; Native American youth were sentenced at 2.5 times their percentage in the state; Hispanic youth at 1.28 times their percentage in the state. (Sentencing Guidelines Commission, December 2005)

The level of disproportionality is even greater among these young people committed to the Department of Social and Health Services, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA). African American youth in JRA residential care are almost 5 times the proportion of African American youth in the state; Native American youth are in JRA at almost 3 times and Hispanic youth at 1.3 times their proportion in the community. (JRA, October 2006)

## **Progress Made to Reduce Disproportionality**

### **Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative**

DMC is a social problem that is being tackled nationally and locally. Of particular note is the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) sponsored and funded by The Annie E. Casey Foundation. JDAI is a grant initiative intended to reduce over-crowding in juvenile detention systems, improve conditions of confinement, and reduce the disproportionate representation of youth of color in these systems.

Washington established formal partnerships with the Casey Foundation in 2003. Since then, the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (GJACC), JRA, the Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators (WAJCA), and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) have worked in conjunction with the Casey Foundation to launch five JDAI sites in Washington State. These sites are operational in Pierce County Juvenile Court, King County Juvenile Court, Yakima County Juvenile Court, Spokane County Juvenile Court, and Whatcom County Juvenile Court. Each county utilizes the three-tiered model for reducing disproportionate minority confinement and detention overcrowding:

1. Utilization of a risk-based detention screening tool to ensure only youth who meet certain criteria are admitted to detention;
2. Youth who qualify for detention alternative programs continue to participate in evidence based programs funded through JRA, such as Aggression Replacement Training (ART), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Multisystemic Therapy (MST), and Consolidated Juvenile Services (CJS) At-Risk interventions for youth with minimal criminal history;
3. Expansion of the warrant reduction program to include at specific sites, hearing reminder phone calls and mail reminders, and eligible youth with warrants having their hearing rescheduled instead of being detained.

Outside of the three-tiered model, each site continues to address disproportionate minority confinement in a way that is unique to their location and community demographics without moving away from the basic goals of the JDAI program. All sites continue to meet at the JDAI statewide meetings, conduct ongoing JDAI site visits here in Washington as well as other JDAI sites across the nation to glean information from programs which enhance services to our local youth. Additional noteworthy accomplishments include:

- Utilization of data driven decision making to address disproportionate minority confinement;
- Expanded use of electronic monitoring, day and evening reporting programs, and work crews to reduce detention admission;

- Conducted meetings with local communities to discuss detention reform and to keep them in the process as valued stakeholders;
- Identification of staff diversity as a goal and addressing the necessary steps towards developing a diverse work force;
- Providing culturally relevant training to staff and culturally relevant services to youth served in the courts.

JDAI in Washington State began with two counties in 2003, King and Pierce. The expansion of the JDAI project to additional counties (Yakima, Spokane, and Whatcom) means a greater number of youth of color are now receiving services under the detention reform model. The program has expanded to serve Hispanic and Native American youth in Spokane and Yakima Counties as well as the inclusion of the tribes and Native American youth served in Whatcom County.

Continued collaborative efforts between JRA, GJACC, WAJCA, WSIPP, and the Casey Foundation will continue to address the needs of detention reform and strengthen the outcomes of JDAI. The combination of these efforts with additional evidence based practices and quality assurance will continue to benefit minority communities/youth and provide future savings to Washington with tax dollars being invested in interventions that work to reduce minority confinement and reduce recidivism.

### **Reducing DMC Through Community Mobilization**

JRA values and supports *justice system based* initiatives and efforts to reduce DMC. Nevertheless, JRA also believes that communities most affected by DMC - those populated primarily by minority families - can and should play a central role in preventing their children from becoming entangled with the juvenile justice system.

JRA is in the process of supplementing the work that is already underway to reduce DMC by investing grant awards of \$50,000 in Community Mobilization initiatives. These grants will be used to bring together community stakeholders (e.g., parents, youth, law enforcement, educators, youth serving entities, faith-based organizations, medical and mental health professionals, employers) to develop comprehensive plans for service delivery and intervention to prevent disproportionate contact and confinement of their children by the legal and justice systems.

The first grant award will be made to a project in the **City of Tacoma**. This community has been selected because of the dense pockets of minority families affected by DMC of their children. These neighborhoods also have the highest concentration of children committed to JRA.

JRA convened a Community Mobilization symposium - ***Wearing the Shoes That Fit*** - in Tacoma on October 11, 2006. 150 stakeholders including youth, families, educators, juvenile justice professionals, members of the judiciary, representatives from youth

serving agencies, law enforcement professionals, and legislators attended. The goals for this symposium were:

- Add to prevention activities related to JRA's Mission by working directly with communities to engage and support members in stemming the feeder system of minority youth into the justice system
- Inspire, mobilize, and support grass roots efforts to reduce DMC
- Examine and discuss Community Mobilization efforts to address DMC currently underway in other states for replication in Washington. But just as importantly, apply the *wisdom of the community* to the problem
- Elicit feedback to develop the content of a Request for Proposals (RFP) and identify considerations for awarding JRA grants to communities for development of plans for reducing DMC

The vision is that a community's plan for reducing DMC would ultimately be used as the basis for seeking long term funding for the services and interventions identified as being critical to preventing DMC of youth. Potential long term funding sources for plan implementation would be identified in the planning process.

JRA will issue a Request for Proposals in January 2007 for the City of Tacoma Community Mobilization project. Proposals will be solicited from entities that can guarantee broad stakeholder representation in DMC planning activities. At a minimum planning group participants must include –

- Affected youth and families
- Educators serving the affected community
- Recognized community leaders
- Law enforcement
- Court personnel
- Employers
- Agencies delivering services to youth and families
- Mental health and medical services providers

Grant awards will be used to -

1. Convene a planning committee comprised of stakeholders connected with a neighborhood adversely impacted by DMC
2. Develop a service and intervention plan to reduce DMC in the affected neighborhood that identifies potential long term funding sources

3. Cover costs incurred for committee related activities and work; e.g.,

- Contracting and consultation with DMC intervention experts
- Purchase of information resources necessary to inform the planning process
- Stakeholder planning meetings including:
  - a. Facilitation
  - b. Meeting space
  - c. Clerical assistance
  - d. Office equipment and supplies
  - e. Travel
  - f. Refreshments
  - g. Other incidentals

JRA plans to award three other grants for Community Mobilization initiatives in Spokane, Yakima, and King Counties and to conduct Community Mobilization symposiums in these communities to announce the initiatives. The next symposium will be convened in Spokane in the spring of 2007.

#### **MacArthur Foundation Models for Change**

The MacArthur Foundation recognizes youth of color, particularly African-American and Native American youth, are overrepresented in most juvenile justice case processing stages in Washington State. The Models for Change initiative has identified as a goal support for county and state entities to build on existing efforts to address disproportionate minority contact, develop improved data collection and analysis and implement new approaches where necessary.